

a significant step toward accomplishing that goal, and will ultimately ensure that we do not fall victim to those same pitfalls and corporate abuses that led to the recent financial disaster.

As we bring accountability through the Wall Street Reform bill, we must preserve the role of the antitrust laws to promote competition and transparency in the industry. Our Nation's antitrust laws exist to protect consumers, and we must ensure they apply fully to Wall Street. There is simply no reason to risk exempting any industry from laws that prohibit price fixing and anticompetitive behavior.

In other sectors, we have seen the problems that result from a lack of adequate antitrust oversight. The insurance industry, which enjoys a statutory exemption from the antitrust laws, is characterized by high levels of market concentration throughout the country. Millions of Americans suffer the consequences through unaffordably high health care costs, which may not reflect the price that would be set through true competition. For the past three Congresses, I have worked to repeal this six-decade-old exemption from the Federal antitrust laws. There is no justification for it, and I have urged the Senate to take up quickly and pass legislation that passed the House with an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

Statutory antitrust exemptions are rare because, as a general rule, when the antitrust laws are supplanted, competition, and therefore consumers, are harmed. Unfortunately, while I have been working in Congress to repeal unwarranted, special interest exemptions, an activist Supreme Court has been reading new exemptions into statutes where they do not exist. In *Credit Suisse v. Billing*, the Supreme Court created antitrust loopholes in securities law by holding that Congress implicitly exempted the antitrust laws. This Court-made exemption took away an important tool consumers had to hold Wall Street accountable for anticompetitive behavior. It is hard enough to bring back competition by repealing explicit exemptions, but now we must be attentive to those loopholes Congress never intended, as well.

In the wake of the *Credit Suisse* decision, we need to be vigilant when we enact comprehensive legislation such as Wall Street reform, to ensure there is no ambiguity that could prevent the antitrust laws from applying. When courts will read any silence on the part of Congress to imply an antitrust exemption, we need to be especially careful in how we craft our laws. Hardworking Americans demand this from their lawmakers.

To ensure there is no doubt about the role of the antitrust laws in this Wall Street reform bill, I am urging the Senate to include several antitrust protections in the Wall Street reform bill that the Senate is considering. First, the bill should include a comprehensive

antitrust savings clause. Second, the bill should maintain Hart-Scott-Rodino antitrust merger review for those large financial acquisitions that are now subject to comprehensive Federal Reserve approval. Third, we should make explicit that the antitrust laws apply to those "bridge" acquisitions of failed firms that will be subject to an expedited emergency review. Finally, we need to preserve adequate competition safeguards in the derivatives exchange market.

These provisions to protect competition and consumers should be included in the final version of the Wall Street reform legislation that I hope the Senate will soon pass. Collectively, these provisions will ensure that antitrust authorities have a vital role in Wall Street oversight for years to come. For too long, large corporate interests have harmed the financial well-being of hardworking Americans. These financial institutions must be regulated, and including these antitrust provisions will ensure courts will not misread the intent of Congress and infer that the activity of Wall Street is exempted from the laws of competition.

Today, I also renew my call for the Senate to take up and pass my amendment to repeal the antitrust exemption for health insurance companies. I hope all Senators will join me in supporting that amendment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION DISCHARGED

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of PN1488, the nomination of Stephen Ayers to be Architect of the Capitol; and the Senate then proceed to the nomination; that the nomination be confirmed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

Stephen T. Ayers, of Maryland, to be Architect of the Capitol for the term of ten years, vice Alan M. Hantman, resigned.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, let me add congratulations to Mr. Ayers. It is a very important job.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider Calendar Nos. 887, 888, 889, and 890; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc; that no further motions be in order; that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the

Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Parker Loren Carl, of Kentucky, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Kentucky for the term of four years.

Gerald Sidney Holt, of Virginia, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Robert R. Almonte, of Texas, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Texas for the term of four years.

Jerry E. Martin, of Tennessee, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee for the term of four years.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MARIACHI CONFERENCE AND FESTIVAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of the Clark County School District's Seventh Annual International Mariachi Conference and Festival. This event promotes cultural awareness, positive citizenry and encourages students in the Las Vegas community to succeed academically via the performance of mariachi music.

The Clark County School District's Secondary Mariachi Education Program provides an annual 3-day Mariachi Conference and Festival where students from across the school district participate in 2 days of music and dance workshops taught by renowned, professional clinicians/performers of the mariachi and ballet folklórico art forms. In this setting, students learn and perform a variety of musical pieces that demonstrate the highest level of musicianship and performance possible for their level of experience. The Mariachi Conference and Festival culminates in a professional concert production in which all student participants display their musical talents and newly-acquired skills to an audience of proud parents, school district personnel, and at-large community members. Participation in this program is something to be proud of and I congratulate all who are instrumental in the development of this local initiative.

In 2002, the Clark County School District recruited Jesus Javier Trujillo to establish the Mariachi Education Program as a means to provide a creative